



## SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

1207 Eubanks Road

Phone (919) 968-2788

Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516

Fax (919) 932-2900

TO: NIM Participants

FROM: Robert Williams, Solid Waste Director

DATE October 5, 2023

SUBJECT: **FAQs Regarding Waste and Recycling Center Proposal**

On August 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2023, the Department of Solid Waste Management held a Neighborhood Information Meeting (NIM) to discuss the intent of the Department to construct a Waste and Recycling Center at the intersection of Orange Grove Road and NC 54 W, Chapel Hill. Below are the most frequently asked questions with answers.

- Have you done soil testing (percolation test)? Actually, pulled plugs?
  - No testing has been completed at this point. Any needed testing will be conducted as required.
- How can you ensure that the materials from the open and closed-top containers won't run right down the hill?
  - There should be little, if any, material that escapes the containers. For added security, the property will be graded to ensure that runoff is steered to the site's Stormwater Control Measures (SCM).
- How many days a week will the proposed site be open?
  - The plan is to maintain the same schedule as currently in effect at Ferguson, Bradshaw and High Rock Road, although the operating hours may change in the future. Those sites are open Tuesday (7am-6pm), Friday (7am-6pm), Saturday (7am-5pm) and Sunday (1pm-6pm).
- Has a traffic study been done? Has a traffic study been completed with the idea of the facility being open 6 days a week? Will it include both types of vehicles and number?
  - Traffic impact studies have not been completed at this point. Only adequacy of the site for the proposed use was completed prior to the neighborhood meeting.



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- Will it take motor oil and antifreeze? What other HHW will it accept?
  - The proposed site would accept motor oil and antifreeze for recycling. Although space would be available for household hazardous waste, there is no plan to include that material.
- What toxic materials will be accepted at the center?
  - No toxic materials will be accepted at the center.
- What other sites were under consideration? Are any other sites currently under consideration?
  - Multiple sites were considered and deemed unsuitable. Ultimately, three sites were referred to the Department's engineering firm for evaluation and the proposed site was deemed the most suitable for the Department's needs. Other sites are not currently under consideration pending resolution related to the proposed site.
- Why aren't we focusing on areas that are closer to town, where people are traveling?
  - The Waste and Recycling Centers are primarily geared toward the rural residents that do not have curbside trash collection. The Center also provides for the disposal of yard waste, tires, and collection of recyclable materials.
- Are they testing for PFAS content?
  - Testing for PFAS is generally undertaken for regulated permitted facilities. A permitted facility is a facility operating under the established regulatory guidelines for the management and handling of municipal, industrial, and hazardous waste within NC. For solid waste purposes, regulated permitted facilities subject to PFAS testing are solid waste sanitary landfills and industrial landfills.
  - Collection sites or residential Waste and Recycling Centers are specifically not required to be permitted under NCDEQ permitting rules. Should testing be required, the Department will undertake the needed testing.
- What is the process that led to this decision? What consideration was given to upgrading Ferguson and Bradshaw?
  - The County has been working on upgrading the Waste and Recycling Centers as part of a long-range plan. Bradshaw and Ferguson are the final centers to be upgraded. When evaluating the sites for upgrades, it was determined that due to size limitations and impervious surface rules the sites cannot be effectively



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upgraded. Therefore, the County's current Capital Improvement Plan project contemplates consolidating the facilities.

- What about the bus stops?
  - Traffic impact studies have not been completed at this point.
- What about the wells?
  - No impact to any wells is expected. The proposed site is a collection center only; no materials are buried or stored at the site.
- What about the zoning?
  - The proposed use is an authorized use under the current zoning of the property. As such, no zoning change is needed.
- Are you planning for the rain events (past 1 in)? What about long-term events because of climate change?
  - Per the Orange County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the design storm will be "1 year, 24-hour storm" which has a total rainfall depth of almost 3-inches. The 1-inch storm is for managing water quality, not quantity. The storm events will be based on either site-specific data or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data for the area.
- How are they going to keep the groundwater safe from leakage/seepage?
  - A Spill Prevention Plan (SP) will be developed for the facility. The SP would detail the procedures to be followed in the event of leakage or a spill, including proper cleanup and disposal. This is a Standard Operating Procedure for all Waste and Recycling Centers.
  - Waste and Recycling Centers receiving Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) are required by NCDEQ to have operational plans reviewed and approved before a permit is issued. The County is not seeking to receive HHW at the proposed facility.
- What about off-gases from biosolids? Is it safe to have Orange County workers and public adjacent to location where OWASA applies biosolids?
  - OWASA's biosolids are stabilized and while they may have some odor, the gases are not toxic. We also follow EPA best practices to reduce odors. Federal and state regulations and OWASA practices concerning the land application of



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biosolids limit potential exposure. OWASA complies with all regulations, and historically we have applied our biosolids at rates well below those allowed by regulation. OWASA does not land apply biosolids when it is raining or when there are wet field conditions, and we meet or exceed all setbacks from streams, residences, wells, and property lines. We process the biosolids in accordance with regulations, so they are less attractive to flies, mosquitos, and rodents.

Based on the low level of pathogens found in OWASA's biosolids, they are certified as Class A, which can be distributed to the public. In addition, Federal and State regulations specify upper concentration limits for selected trace metals in biosolids. The low concentrations of trace metals in OWASA's biosolids qualify for the Exceptional Quality designation from EPA.

- Has OWASA tested for PFAS in their biosolids?
  - OWASA has begun monitoring for PFAS in biosolids. Once there are two sets of sampling results from OWASAs contracted laboratory, they will begin publishing the results on their PFAS monitoring dashboard. As shown on the PFAS monitoring dashboard, there are PFAS compounds in the influent and effluent of the WWTP. OWASAs current treatment processes do not remove PFAS compounds. Thus, there is an anticipation that PFAS will be present in the biosolids.
- USGS study shows impacts from biosolids on Collins Creek.
  - OWASA participated in this study with the USGS to gain a better understanding of the transport of nutrients and bacteria from biosolids applications to groundwater and surface water. The study showed that there were no exceedances of EPA nutrient and bacteria concentration limits for land-applied biosolids. That study did show increased nitrogen, particularly in the form of nitrate, in surface water and groundwater topographically downstream of application sites. There was no increase in pathogen concentrations.
- UNC study (Dr. Steven Wing) shows multiple impacts to human health from biosolids.
  - This was a qualitative (non-quantitative) study detailing anecdotes from a small group of persons living near biosolids application sites. The study described and



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compared neighbors' observations of their own physical and mental impacts that they attribute to living adjacent to biosolid application fields. The study did not show cause and effect between human health and biosolid application.

- As liquid evaporates, concentrates solids which are washed off during rain or released to atmosphere.
  - It is unclear whether this comment applied to biosolids or more generally. OWASA applies biosolids during dry periods in accordance with regulations and best practices. The liquid absorbs into the soil, and the grassed fields and regulatory buffers prevent wash-off to area streams.
  
- What treatments will the surface water get? How does water in the retention pond get treated?
  - Spills and leaks are to be cleaned up immediately upon identification per the Spill Prevention Plan. Therefore, the stormwater runoff to the Stormwater Control Measures will be treated for total suspended solids and nutrient removal per the requirements of the Orange County Unified Development Ordinance and the NCDEQ Minimum Design Standards for Stormwater Control Measures.
  
- What about the human impact of the proposal?
  - The goal of the Center is to provide an environmentally friendly site for disposal of wastes and recyclables. Most would agree that the existence of sites such as these reduce improper disposal of materials, such as illegal dumping or burning of materials, which can have significant impacts on a community. These facilities, as evidenced by their exclusion from permitting requirements by the Division of Environmental Quality, are the least impactful solid waste facilities.
  
- Why wouldn't you put the site away from residents?
  - Waste and Recycling Centers are in rural parts of the County. This is done for the convenience of citizens living within a reasonable distance of the facility.
  
- How much is this going to cost? Has it already been budgeted? Is it going to come out of the SW fee?
  - The estimated cost for engineering services, design and construction is \$1.5 million dollars. All Orange County Solid Waste facilities and programs are funded by the



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Solid Waste programs fee along with revenues from operation of the Construction and Demolition landfill, sale of recyclables, and sale of mulch.

- Why do we need to be the “top of the line”? Why can’t we just use what we have? Why do we need to upgrade?
  - The current Bradshaw and Ferguson sites are inadequate and have multiple challenges. Current services are limited and any expansion to collect additional recyclable materials is unavailable because of size limitations.
- Are there opportunities for somewhere that isn’t right near a neighborhood? How about the other OWASA property not abutting a neighborhood?
  - Other OWASA properties were evaluated. Those properties were deemed not the best location for the site. Those that have had biosolid application were not considered a viable site. While the entire parcel on which the Waste and Recycling site is proposed to be located is used for biosolids application, the specific area of the proposed waste and recycling center is upgradient from the biosolids application area and has not had biosolids applied to it. The proposed site was deemed the most suitable for the intended use.
- What will happen to the property value of the homes near the site?
  - Property values at homes near the County’s other Waste and Recycling Centers do not appear to have been negatively impacted. See appendix A
- What studies will be done for the protection of wildlife species? What will be the environmental impact from this?
  - The County will comply with federal and state regulations related to area wildlife.
- How were the public meetings advertised?
  - Pursuant to the County UDO all property owners within 1,000 feet of the proposed site were mailed a notice of the Neighborhood Information Meetings, and a sign was erected on the site. The Meetings were also publicized on the Solid Waste website and social media accounts. In addition, notice of the meetings was included in the Solid Waste e-news, sent to approximately 6,000 subscribers.
- Why aren’t the Bradshaw and Ferguson facilities open more days a week? Would opening the sites more eliminate the need for the improvement?



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- Opening the Bradshaw and Ferguson sites additional hours and days will not overcome the limitations on the properties. The sites have limited container capacity. Opening additional hours also will increase collection frequency thus increasing fuel usage and environmental impacts.
- How many signatures are needed to prevent this site from being built? Do the signatures have to be from Orange County? How close do the signatures have to be to the proposed site?
  - The Department is not aware of any method whereby signatures prevent the building of a Waste and Recycling Center.
- Who decides who gets notifications about the public meetings?
  - The State of North Carolina requires notice be given to those within 500 feet of a project; Orange County requires that the notice be given to those within 1,000 feet of a project.
- Why do we need to do this project? Why can't we keep Ferguson and Bradshaw the way they are?
  - Both Ferguson and Bradshaw have serious limitations. Neither site has running water or bathroom facilities for employees. Improvements are needed to have a more environmentally friendly collection center, including the addition of self-contained compactors. Improvements to both sites are limited due to the impervious surface rules in effect for land within a protected watershed. The impervious surface limitations and size limitations for both facilities prevent the sites improvement to utilize compactors for household municipal solid waste (garbage), a method that improves the environmental friendliness of collection centers. In addition, Bradshaw is only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre thereby limiting services available while also having significant safety issues. Services available at Ferguson are also limited.
- If there will not be any effect on other areas from the activities at the site, does the new site need to be in the unprotected watershed?
  - Although the site does not have to be within the unprotected watershed, the total amount of land required for the project is reduced when located in the unprotected watershed due to the impervious surface limits.
- What are going to be the improvements at the new site?



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- The proposed site will be paved surfaces with compactors for municipal solid waste (garbage) and single stream material for recycling, a significantly more efficient and environmentally friendly collection method. In addition, other materials will immediately be accepted for recycling, including textiles, plastic bags, plastic film, and food waste. Finally, as recycling for other materials is possible, including for example Styrofoam, the proposed site will have sufficient space to accommodate additional collection containers.
- How will you be safe cleaning up the trash on the side of the road?  
Policing of the site and surrounding area will be conducted in the same manner as trash is collected from the roadside at the other facilities.
- Why are we building a new site to collect more waste when we are trying to reach a goal of zero waste by 2045?
  - The Zero Waste by 2045 program looks at all services relating to recycling and waste collection/disposal services. The Zero Waste plan will provide recommendations on how best to reduce waste, improve recycling, and reduce the County's carbon footprint in the community.

Waste and Recycling Centers are for residents to use to conveniently dispose of their household waste and to conveniently recycle targeted material. The proposed site will offer additional opportunities to recycle materials that are not eligible for single stream recycling collection.

- Is this project to begin November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2023 as set forth in the CIP?
  - The County's CIP budget shows the start of the project in November of 2023. The start of the project is engineering design and land acquisition. As reflected in the CIP, the construction is not budgeted or anticipated until sometime after July of 2024.
- What studies have been done and what have yet to be done?
  - A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment will take place as well as a geotechnical soil analysis, and topographic survey. Any studies deemed necessary by the results



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from the above-mentioned studies and the local and state regulatory agencies will be conducted as well.

- What were/are the steps in the process for this project?
  - The BOCC will have to approve the acquisition of land, appropriate funds for the construction, and approve a construction contract.
- Where can we find the contact information on the County Commissioners who will be voting on this?
  - Contact information for County Commissioners is available on the Orange County, NC website. <https://orangecountync.gov/953/Board-of-County-Commissioners-BOCC>
- How many trips a day do the trucks take from Ferguson/Bradshaw? What times of day do they come in and out? What are the busiest days?
  - Currently collection trucks visit Ferguson 10 (ten) times per week and Bradshaw 5 (five) times per week. The collection takes place, generally, on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. Collection trucks do not run on Sundays. The sites busiest days are Saturday and Sunday.
- What is the decibel rating of the compactors?
  - Decibel level is 66. For a point of reference: The CDC reports sound is measured in decibels (dB). A whisper is about 30 dB, normal conversation is about 60 dB, and a washing machine or dishwasher is about 70dB.
- Can you guarantee that this site will not cause pollution to the drinking water in the community?
  - Residential Collection Centers are deemed safe as evidenced by NCDEQ not requiring permits for these facilities. There have been no known impacts on the drinking water around the County's other Waste and Recycling Centers
- Have you visited the property?
  - Yes, Orange County staff along with the Departments' contracted engineering firm, TRC, visited the proposed site.
- What was the criteria for choosing this property?
  - Criteria for the site included finding an available site located between the Ferguson and Bradshaw Centers of adequate size with sufficient road set back so as not to



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impede traffic. In addition, the site needed to be cost effective with minimal environmental impact.

- How many other sites were looked at? There was a total of four sites being considered. PINs are from the Orange County Tax Administration Office.

Property Identification Number

- 9749140294
  - 9739957250
  - 9739843759
  - 9739645698
- For other sites formally considered but disqualified, can you provide any specific reason(s) (other than not being the centermost between Bradshaw and Ferguson) why each was disqualified? Bio-solid applications, grade of land, meaning too steep, significant wetland or surface water features, and location too close to main highway are some of the disqualifiers.
  - For other sites formally considered, can you provide info on who visited these sites and the dates of visit? Solid Waste Staff and TRC Engineering and OWASA. OWASA was called in after a decision was made on which site was the most suitable.
  - How many visits to Bradshaw and Ferguson?

| Year  | Bradshaw | Ferguson |
|-------|----------|----------|
| FY-21 | 25,174   | 40,498   |
| FY-22 | 32,349   | 56,259   |
| FY-23 | 33,485   | 61,120   |